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NEWS RELEASE

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Turnpike Chase Ends in Marijuana Bust

United States Attorney David E. O'Meilia announced that a federal Grand Jury indictment was returned yesterday charging two men from Sonora, Mexico with trafficking in marijuana.

Jesus Martin-Arvizu, 23, and Jose Landa-Medina, 18, are charged with Possession with Intent to Distribute Marijuana. The defendants came to the attention of law enforcement around 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday morning, November 4. At that point an Oklahoma Highway Patrol trooper attempted to stop a gray Ford truck with Ohio license plates for a traffic violation on Interstate 44 at the toll plaza near Vinita. The truck allegedly failed to stop and accelerated at a high rate of speed in excess of 100 mph in an attempt to evade the trooper, all the while making unsafe lane changes. The truck traveled through the McDonald's concession maintaining a high rate of speed and continued eastbound swerving in and around traffic. At some point the truck braked abruptly in the lane of traffic and was observed to leave the Interstate. It drove up a steep embankment, plowed through a number of fences and a pasture where it was halted at a creek, at which time the driver and passenger exited the vehicle and fled on foot. The driver, Martin-Arvizu, and the passenger, Landa-Medina, were soon apprehended by OHP troopers. The truck was searched and was allegedly found to contain six large black duffle bags and a large bundle of what appeared to be marijuana. The duffle bags allegedly contained 22 bundles of what also appeared to be marijuana. The total amount of marijuana allegedly found in possession of the defendants was 575 pounds.

The defendants are scheduled to appear for an initial appearance in the federal magistrate's court in Tulsa at 2:00 p.m. today.

A Grand Jury indictment is one method of charging a defendant with alleged violations of federal law, which must be proven in a court of law beyond a reasonable doubt to overcome the defendant's presumption of innocence.